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ADULT COLLEGE CAREER EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES ACCESS

EMERITUS CAREER AND VOCATIONAL EXPLORATION

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ADULT COLLEGE CAREER EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEED

The rapidly increasing number of older adults who desire or need to reenter the work force presents a major challenge to industry and education. For an effective resolution to this growing problem, these social and economic institutions must work together.

Perspectives By The Individual And Society

The dilemma is two-pronged: the perspective of the older person and the perspective of society. The older person is frequently on a fixed or near-fixed income during a time of spiraling inflation. Decreased income from social security, pension, and savings prevents the retirement activities to which the older person looked forward during their years of active employment (DeCrow, 1978, p.3). Older persons may also need to stay involved in paid or voluntary work roles to continue their independence and a feeling of value to society.

The societal perspective views the declining ratio of active workers contributing to social support systems to the ratio of retirees. Pension systems, social security and other social service systems face a staggering challenge. It is the actively employed who are asked to increase their financial contributions to support retired workers (Aiken, 1978, p. 130). Millions of trained and experienced older people constitute a vast resource of workers, paid, self-employed or volunteer, who are able and willing to address this need in the nation's economic and social institutions (Careers For Older Americans, 1980; The National Committee on Career For Older Americans, 1979, p. i).

Adult College Career Employment Support Services

Educational institutions are in key positions to address this issue through counseling, training and placement services for older persons seeking new careers (The National Committee on Careers For Older Americans, 1979, p. i, ii). A part of this task is to counsel private and public organizations on the advantages of utilizing the skills, experience and perspectives of older people in the work force.

More and more adults are returning to some system of education in order to acquire new information and skills to meet the demands of our rapidly changing and increasingly complex society (Goldberg, 1980). The need for education and counseling may be dramatically increased for reentry older people who have less recent experience with job applications and necessary technological skills.

As these adults seek new opportunities in education and employment, they will experience periods of value and identity reassessment which may include some psychological stress (Parelius, 1979). It is important that both educational and support services in institutions of higher education be available to them.

Saddleback College has developed a plan to facilitate the entry or reentry of older persons into the work force as paid or volunteer workers. This program is accomplished in coordination with community agencies, local industry and the college guidance, career placement and vocational education divisions. The program is called Adult College Career Employment Support Services or ACCESS. A Conjoint Teaching-Learning Strategy is utilized in this program emphasizing the responsibility of both the facilitator and the participant in the learning environment.

ACCESS includes the identification of older adults who want to enter or reenter the work force, job development in industry by a group of volunteers in Programs at Saddleback (VIPS) in coordination with the college Career Placement Office, group and individual career and vocational exploration through a mini-course in the Emeritus Institute for Lifelong Learning, vocational education if needed, job placement, and follow-up.

The focus of this paper is directed toward the research and development of an educational plan for the two module career guidance mini-course for older adults. This course, Emeritus Career and Vocational Exploration, was prepared in cooperation with the college Division of Counseling and Guidance.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TARGET POPULATION

While there has been an increasing amount of study of older adults in recent years, little attention has been paid to this population in relationship to higher education or reentry into employment. Some assessment of the client group is vital to the preparation and planning for the Emeritus Career and Vocational Exploration course.

Definitions and Demographic Characteristics

Definition For the purpose of this program, the older adult is defined as 45 years of age or older. This is the age identified by the Department of Labor at which a worker experiences age-related problems in reentering the labor force.

Demography In 1977 there were almost 23 million Americans 65 or over. As we step into the 21st century, it is projected that one-fifth of the population will be 65 or over (DeCrow, 1978, p.3). A comparison to a total population of 222,000,000 in 1980 is helpful: 46,125,000 or 20.8% age 55 plus, 21,198,000 age 55-64, 15,493,000 age 65-74, and 9,434,000 age 75 and older (The National Committee on Careers For Older Americans, 1975, p.10). The number of persons 65 years and older has increased and will continue to increase by about 3 to 5 million every ten years (Palmore, 1980, p. 436).

Sex Ratio Because women enjoy greater longivity than men, there are progressively more women than men in the older age groups. In 1980 there were about 145 women over 65 for every 100 men. This ratio is expected to increase to 155 by the year 2000. (Palmore, 1980, p. 436).

Intelligence Conclusions from a study reported to the National Institute on Aging in 1977 answered the question, "Does intelligence decline with age?" with a qualified no. (Labouvie-Uief, 1977). One qualification relates to generation since intelligence appears to differ by generation. For example, while the majority of older adults are healthy, vigorous and increasingly better educated, tomorrow's generation will enjoy greater health and will be better educated.

A review of research regarding academic capabilities of older undergraduate students showed that they do perform adequately and effectively, as assessed by gradepoint averages in competitive undergraduate environments (Kasworm, 1980). Older adults have made a conscious commitment and bring a rich heritage of experiences which bring valuable perspectives for new knowledge.

Income Median incomes of persons over 65 remain at about one-half that of younger persons. Poverty is substantially more frequent among elders than others: 15.3% for those over 65 compared to 12% for those under 65. (Palmore, 1980, p. 438).

Education Educational differences are closely related to unemployment and for many years helped to explain withdrawal of those over 45 years of age from employment. The educational gap has narrowed considerably; in 1976, 60% of workers 55-64 and 85% of those 25-30 had high school educations compared with 40 and 70 percent 10 years earlier (U. S. Department of Labor, 1979, p. 28-9). Older workers compensate for formal schooling by experience and training. Recurrent education and training has been identified by the Department of Labor as an antidote for human capital obsolescence (U. S. Department of Labor, 1979, p. 113).

Health While certain physiological capacities may decrease with age, we cannot assume that these changes affect physical capacities so that they cannot be overcome. For example, 1) changes in visual functions compensated by wearing eyeglasses and increasing illumination, 2) impairment of motor skills in longer reaction time compensated by working more slowly and accurately in selected jobs, and 3) hearing loss compensated by use of hearing aids and self-selection out of dangerous situations (U. S. Department of Labor, 1979, p. 80-82). It must be remembered that the majority of older persons are alert, healthy and vigorous.

Productivity Government-sponsored research on age and job performance has not been systematic but overall results show no consistent pattern of superior productivity in any age group. Most productivity studies show either a slight positive relationship with age or none at all (U. S. Department of Labor, 1979, p. 87).

Older Unemployed Workers

A program designed to facilitate reentry into the educational and employment arenas must address the needs of two groups, those who have retired and want to reenter the work force and unemployed older workers who have not yet retired. For the purposes of this program, unemployed older workers will be identified as those who find difficulty in reemployment due to age.

Characteristics of older unemployed workers given by the Department of Labor in an Employment and Training Report to the President in 1977 showed, 1) those 45 years old and older were unemployed longer than other age groups and 2) there was a higher percentage of discouraged workers in civilian labor force in the age grouping 55 years old and over (Committee for Economic Development, 1978, p. 25). This committee recommended that, since four out of five jobs are in the private sector, a stronger private-public partnership be developed to increase training and job opportunities and to speed the transition of the hard-to-employ from government income support and subsidized public or private jobs to more permanent private employment (op. cit., p. 13).

Retired Persons

In 1976, 15% of Americans 65 years of age and older were living in poverty, with the highest poverty rate occurring among aged individuals not living in families, the majority of whom are women (U. S. Department of Labor, 1979, p. 63). There are many others who, while not living in poverty, need some additional income to raise their standard of living to include some of those things enjoyed by those who are currently employed.

The Harris Survey of 1974, a study for the National Council on Aging, found as follows (The National Committee on Careers For Older Americans, 1975, p. 29):

1. Older People Want to Work
   of people over 65 and not working in any capacity:
   -2.2 million feel they have specific skills that no one will give them a chance to use;
   -3 million are interested in learning new skills;
   -4 million would like to work and be paid for it.

2. Older People Want To Volunteer
   -4.5 million people over 65 are now serving as volunteers;
   -another 2.1 million would like to do volunteer work, but have not done so.

If we facilitate the reinvolvement of a significant number of these persons back into active participation, we can improve the strength of the work force, while assisting them to improve their status financially and psychologically.

A relatively new phenomenon is the younger retiree, 55-65, who has retired from a first career and who is looking for other life options or new careers (Aiken, 1978, p. 126). This individual is apt to be better educated and healthier. Redirection in a second career choice is increasingly leading them back to institutions of higher education.

COMPONENTS OF EMERITUS CAREER AND VOCATIONAL EXPLORATION

Emeritus Career and Vocational Exploration includes two four-week modules with a minimal requirement of one four-week module. Participants with recency of experience and higher skills may elect to proceed directly to Career Placement or for further vocational education or skills brush-up. Those electing both four-week sessions gain more indepth assessment and self-merchandizing skills.

Individual Assessment of Ability, Skills, Education, Experience and Life Situation

Assessment aims at identifying individual characteristics which are important for decisions in person-society relationships. It includes interviewing, observation, and various other methods for combining and communicating personal information. (Sundberg, 1978, p. 179). Emeritus Career and Vocational Exploration assists the individual in a personal assessment with application to educational and employment needs and interrelationships.

One of the first challenges in an educational program designed to assist the older adult in self-assessment is the frequent tendency of the individual to believe the negative stereotypes attributed to older age groups (Carotenuto, 1980, p. 141). The dispelling of myths related to age is an important aspect of counseling for the older adult and for the employer during job development.

Taking a personal inventory after years away from career planning may be difficult for most older adults but it is the most important requirement in the employment entry-reentry process. Billingsley provides some personal inventory guidelines which have been modified here for the target population (Billingsley, 1978, p. 8-20).

1. Complete the inventory in small increments for better recall and consideration.
2. Make rough drafts of each section for rewrite.
3. Provide job history, especially the most recent, and detail those jobs that seem to illustrate characteristics, qualities, skills, or abilities that relate to job goals.
4. Provide formal educational information and significant on-the-job training or job-related continuing education.
5. Clarify values by listing jobs disliked.
6. As you inventory personal experiences, watch for trends, traits, interests that seem to reappear over time.
7. Time and energy spent in this personal inventory will provide a self-assessment that will contribute toward more effective interviewing and resume preparation.

Survey of Employment Problems and Opportunities

Among economic problems affecting self-assessment may be those identified by Schulz: a) an age at which discrimination in hiring may have already been experienced, b) job obsolescence, c) changing job-performance capabilities, and d) retired by mandatory retirement regulations (Schulz, 1976, p. 51). Another economic situation experienced by many is the limit in amount of work persons can engage in due to the Social Security retirement test or similar condition in other retirement and pension systems (Op.Cit., p. 49, 92 & National Committee on Careers For Older Americans, p. 36-7).

Closely related to these economic factors is the degree of flexibility related to transportation. Lack of adequate transportation to facilitate searches for work or to commute to jobs is a problem for some older persons.

The results of job development in local communities is a vital part of this exploration course for older adults. The corps of VIPS bring their own expertise and the results of job development interviews with employers in selected industries and business organizations.

Current trends to be explored in the national and local level include both full-time and part-time employment practices.

The National Policy Center on Employment and Retirement has identified alternate work options (Andrus Gerontology Center, 1981).

. Flexitime - Individuals choose the times they will start and stop working, but must be present during a core period each day and work an agreed-upon number of hours.

. Compressed Work Week - Individuals work the usual number of hours required for full-time positions, but in fewer than five days.

- Part-Time Work - Individuals work a reduced number of hours on a permanent or temporary basis. Many variations are possible, including part day, part week, part year, alternating weeks and alternating months.

- Job Sharing - A variation of part-time work in which two individuals share responsibility on a permanent basis for one full-time position.

- Phased Retirement - Individuals gradually reduce the number of hours they work until they completely retire.

- Sabbaticals/Extended Vacations - Individuals are allowed time off to pursue avocational interests.

- Job Redesign - Stressful tasks associated with jobs are redistributed or the work environment is modified.

- Job Reassignment - Individuals are reassigned to different jobs, either with comparable responsibilities, status and pay (lateral transfers) or with lesser responsibilities, status and pay (demotions).

These options are explored in both job development and the exploration by the older adult in job trends and job possibilities to the extent that they are available.

Self-employment may be an attractive option for some. Older Americans today possess a range of skills and talents never before found in an older population. They can work on a self-employed basis with relatively small investment in tools, equipment, materials, space and staff help. (The National Committee On Careers For Older Americans, 1975, p. 31).

Volunteer opportunities for meaningful involvement may be attractive for some who want to make a contribution to the economic, social, or political life

in the community and who do not wish gainful employment (Op. Cit. p. 32). These individuals may benefit from the Emeritus Career And Vocational Exploration process.

Assessment of Employment Needs

Becoming productive members of the labor force may depend upon the availability of work opportunities closely tailored to individual needs. It will also depend upon a realistic appraisal of individual abilities compared with job opportunities and requirements.

Job development is a major component of the ACCESS program. VIPS in conjunction with the Career Placement Office are actively engaged in initial and on-going job development in local business and industry. Current job information is made available for participants in Emeritus Career and Vocational Exploration.

Assessment of Educational Needs

A general principle of andragogy may be applied in the evaluation of educational needs. Those methods that encourage learners to analyze their own experience or to take initiative in seeking out new knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, or values tend to bring about personal growth (Watson, 1980, p. 16). This is compatible with Conjoint Teaching-Learning Strategy in that it outlines the responsibility of the learner. Conjointly, educational needs may be identified based upon an evaluation of the gap between prior learning and experience and the goals set.

Personal Plan Development

Personal plan development includes educational and/or job seeking strategies. Education may include skills brush-up, vocational training or new career education. Employment strategies includes the nature of jobs or positions to be sought and job-seeking plans.

An outcome of personal plan development is the individuals' portfolio. This includes a resume, exhibits, references, and other self-merchandising instruments. This portfolio design is based on the individual's education and experience and the type of position to be sought.

SUMMARY

Increased employment for older workers depends on necessary orientation and training as well as breaking down barriers to their employment. The rapidly increasing number of older workers seeking employment presents a major challenge to educational institutions and public and private industry.

One community college is meeting this challenge through the development of an Adult College Career Employment Support Services program (ACCESS). In co-operation with local industry, retired experts who serve as Volunteers in Programs at Saddleback (VIPS), and other college divisions, the Emeritus Institute For Lifelong Learning has initiated this program.

Key to the success of the program is the Emeritus Career and Vocational Exploration mini-course which includes an orientation, assessment of educational and employment needs, personal plan development and portfolio preparation (Exhibit A). A Conjoint Teaching-Learning Strategy is utilized throughout the program.

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Saddleback Community College District

COURSE OUTLINE

AP 160X EMERITUS CAREER & VOCATIONAL EXPLORATION (EI)

Course No. | Course Title

Units:	.5-1
Semester Hours:	8-16
Lecture Hours:	2
Lab Hours:	0
Prerequisites:	NONE

CROSS REFERENCED AS: _____
Course No.(s) | Course Title(s)

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Emeritus Career & Vocational Exploration is a mini-course designed to facilitate reentry into employment for those who may have employment problems related to age. It will include an orientation to current employment problems and opportunities, assessment of educational and employment needs, and personal plan development. Two four-week modules are offered with a minimum requirement of one module.

EXPECTED STUDENT OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. assess individual needs in education and employment,
2. outline major existing employment problems and opportunities,
3. develop an educational and employment reentry plan,
4. prepare a personal portfolio, including a resume and exhibits,
5. demonstrate effective interviewing technique, and
6. identify goals and plan for evaluation.

COURSE CONTENT

Two modules: Module 1 required; Module 2 recommended.
Module 1: 4 sessions X 2 hours each (.5U)
- Orientation to Program
- Assessment of Needs: Employment
- Survey of Employment Problems & Opportunities
- Assessment of Skills Levels
- Assessment of Needs: Educational

(Over)

METHODS OF PRESENTATION (Check all appropriate items)

- ☒ Field Trips
- ☒ Guest Speakers
- ☐ Lab
- ☒ Lecture
- ☒ Media
- ☒ Other Student portfolio project

METHODS OF EVALUATION (Check all appropriate items)

- ☐ Final Examination
- ☐ Mid-term Examination
- ☒ Project(s)
- ☐ Quizzes
- ☐ Term Paper(s)
- ☒ Other Instructor-student evaluation of accomplishment

REQUIRED TEXT

To be selected

SPECIAL STUDENT MATERIALS

None

Lab Fee $_____

INST. 20 (Rev. 7-80)2M

Course No. AO 160X
Course Title EMERITUS CAREER & VOCATIONAL EXPLORATION (EI)
Prepared by
Date

AP 160X EMERITUS CAREER AND VOCATIONAL EXPLORATION (EI)

COURSE CONTENT (Continued)

Module 1: (Continued)

Goal Setting and Value Clarification
Educational/Employment Plan

Module 2: 4 session X 2 hours each (.5U)
Dynamics of Job Search
Resume Writing
Interviewing
Self Merchandising
Evaluation of Job Performance